REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending of which claims 1 and 6 are independent. In this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 5-7, and 9-10 have been amended to clarify an aspect of the invention and to correct typographical errors. Support is found in, for example, FIG. 6 and corresponding descriptions. Care has been exercised not to introduce new matter.

No new issue has been introduced by the above amendments, since amendments to claim 1 has incorporated subject matter of allowed claim 6 and is supported by the FIG. 6 and corresponding descriptions and amendments to claims 3, 6, 7, 9 and 10 to clarify the subject matter is supported by FIG. 6 and corresponding descriptions.

Objection to the Claims

Claims 1 and 6 were objected to. In this Amendment, claims 1 and 6 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Rejections of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential elements. Claims 6-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential elements.

In particular, with respect to indication of unclearness regarding "the virtual bridge device...switches data frames if the data frames entering the virtual bridge device are control messages," in claim 1 (paragraph 11 of the Office Action), the recitation has been changed to "the virtual bridge device...switches data frames if the data frames entering the virtual bridge device are **not** control messages," as suggested by the Examiner.

With respect to indication of unclearness on paragraph 12 of the Office Action regarding "the virtual bridge device switches data between the UNIs and/or the NNIs," the limitations have been deleted.

As regards indication of unclearness on paragraph 13 of the Office Action regarding "the UNIs and/or the NNIs," the claim language "and/or" has been changed to "and."

With respect to indication of indefiniteness on paragraph 14 of the Office Action regarding "a virtual bridge processing unit... to process data," "data formats," and "a database...configured to store information indicative of data types to facilitate the data processing," they have been changed to "a virtual bridge processing unit...for processing of the data frames," "data types," and "a database ....configured to store information indicative of data types to facilitate the processing of the data frames of the virtual bridge processing unit."

With respect to indication of missing of the "mapping and demapping device," on paragraph 15 of the Office Action, which the Examiner alleged is necessary for implementing the claimed invention, the mapping and demapping device is not necessary for implementing the claimed invention, as disclosed in FIG. 6, one example of what is recited in claim 1.

As regards indication of unclearness on paragraph 16 of the Office Action regarding "frames," "a control interface unit coupled with the database to control the database," and "modifying the data frame," in claim 6, the claim languages have been changed to "the data

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frame," "a control interface unit coupled with the database, the database being controlled via the control interface unit," and "extracting an output port number from the retrieval result, modifying the data frame so as to replace the input data type number in the data frames with the output data type number" respectively. In addition, the claim language "data processing," in claim 6, which was also indicated as unclear, has been deleted.

With respect to indication of omission of essential steps in claim 6 on paragraph 17 of the Office Action, the claim language "searching in the database according to a rule constructed based on information indicative of the data frames," has been changed to "searching in the database according to the virtual bridge number, the port number, the destination address and the VLAN number," to clarify the use of "the virtual bridge number and the port number."

As regards indication of omission of essential structural cooperative relationships of elements on paragraph 18 of the Office Action, claim language "a virtual bridge processing unit, coupled with the inter-device interface for processing of the data frames," which was recited in claim 1, has been added to claim 6 to clarify connections among the inter-device interface, the virtual bridge processing unit, the database and the control interface unit.

Therefore, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 6-12 were indicated as being allowable if amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and the claim objection set forth in the Office Action. Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for so indicating.

The Office Action included a Statement of Reasons for Allowance. Although Applicants agree that the claims are patentable over the art, entry of the Statement into the record should not necessarily be construed as any agreement with or acquiescence by Applicants in the particular

reasoning set forth in the Statement, particularly to the extent if any that the wording used in the Statement may differ from the actual claim language and/or the otherwise proper interpretation of the claim language in view of the specification and prosecution history.

Rejections of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Casey et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0142674, hereinafter "Casey"), in view of Zelig et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0037279, hereinafter "Zelig"), and further in view of Sinn et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0010519, hereinafter "Sinn") and Mahajan et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0186694, hereinafter "Mahajan").

In response, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate subject matter of allowed claim 6. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and claims dependent thereupon are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application should be allowed and the case passed to issue. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated to expedite the prosecution of the application.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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